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Task 1: Manifesto writing

Word count: 548

Task 2: Observational writing

Word count: 549

Task 3: Practice-based writing

Word count: 515

Task 1 – Manifesto writing

My Art is for everybody

My Art does not have to have a greater meaning

My Art that is purely for decorative purposes is still art

My Art is not mass produced

My Art is bespoke

My Art is always original

My Art is an ever evolving and progressive force in my life

My Art expresses that which cannot be put into words

My Art brings a culmination of centuries of ideas and skills into the modern age

My Art is valued in the least monetary sense

I enjoyed studying the manifestos of Gilbert and George (The Ten Commandments, 2007 and What Our Art Means, 1970) as they both read as a list, with a declarative tone. I echoed their format and use of simple, unflowery language which creates impact and is easy for everyone to understand – this links with my values of art being accessible to all. Indeed, the lines “The 20th century has been cursed with an art that cannot be understood. The decadent artists stand for themselves and the chosen few, laughing and dismissing the normal outsider” (Gilbert and George, 1970) stood out to me, and the sentiment is reflected in my opening statement “My Art is for everybody”. I can loosely relate to the anti-art movement associated with the Dadaists – this dismissal of art theories, movements and rules, the “laboratories of formal ideas” (Tzara, 1918, p.2) in that good art does not always have a metaphorical, abstract or political meaning or narrative; it can be totally random or open to interpretation. Though artists that have a powerful and relevant message to convey should be respected, I question whether these messages be reserved only for those at the top of the hierarchy and arguably the cause of most of the issues highlighted by the artists. I also wonder, does the world need another white, heterosexual, cisgender, middle class person to take the stage?

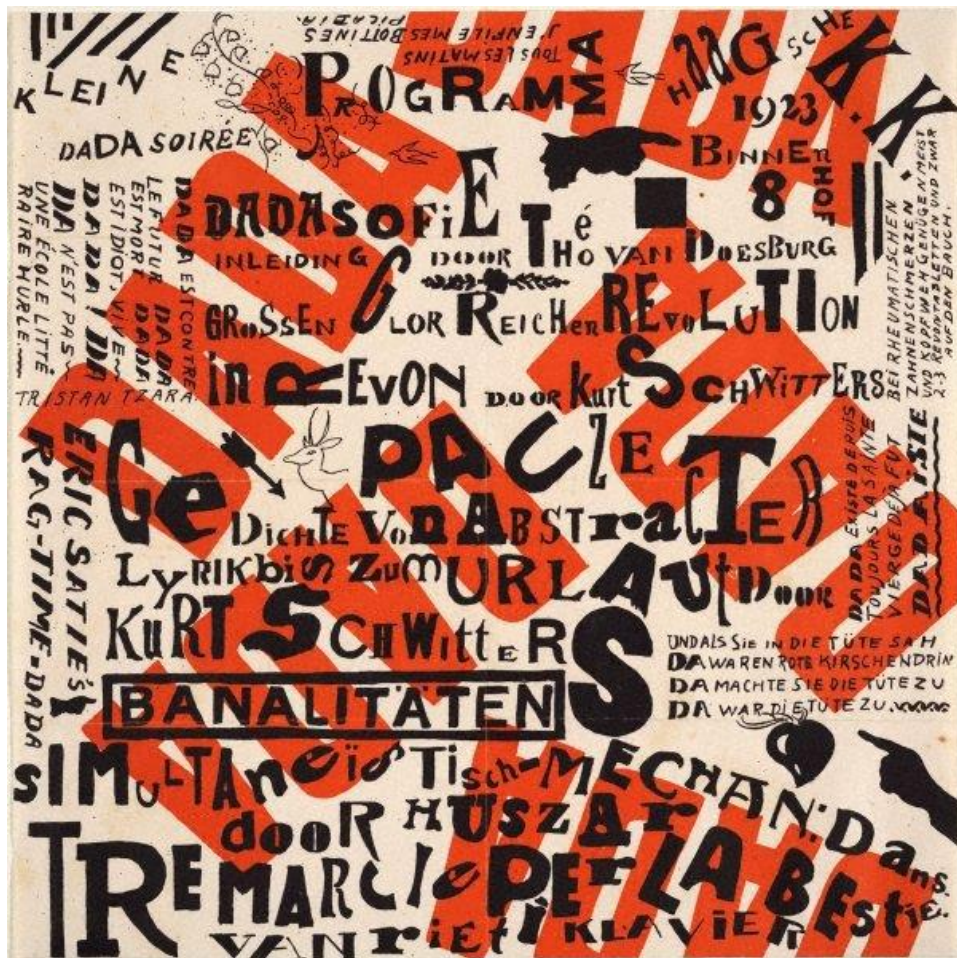


Fig. 1 Kleine Dada Soirée, Schwitters, K., Van Doesburg, T. (1922)

From an environmental standpoint, as referred to in the 4th point, “My Art is not mass produced”, a shift back into artisan, handmade and bespoke would be favourable as people begin to see the detrimental effects of the age of mass production, fast fashion and single-use items. Artistically, I feel hand crafted pieces have a higher quality and worth to them, as Walter Benjamin wrote, “The situations into which the product of mechanical reproduction can be brought may not touch the actual work of art, yet the quality of its presence is always depreciated.” (2008, p.4). In my practice I want to become a craftsperson or artisan, and make beautiful and decorative art that bring joy to anyone, with a nod to the ideas of The Aesthetic Movement and Arts and Crafts which were “more to do with the creation of the art-object than with the art-object itself” (Haslam 1988, p.9). I want to spend time learning ancient practices such as stained glass, but bring the aesthetic content into modern times, breaking the traditional boundaries of the craft to create things never seen before in that medium. I hope to encourage myself and other makers to be a craft advocate, whilst reusing and recycling materials where possible to create art that lasts and is valued for an environmentally reasonable length of time.



Fig 3. The Pros and Cons of Manufacturing in China, CAD Crowd, (2020)

As per the final point in my manifesto, I would like to distinguish myself from financially incentivised making. Huge sums of money are being passed around for pieces by whatever artist is churning out fashionable/profitable/good investment art – according to a study by the Los Angeles Times, in 2013, over 83% of £63 billion was spent on just 8% of art sold (Shea, R. 2014). This is almost a gentrification of, and total contradiction to, the purpose of art. Art should be made to be seen, felt, thought about, displayed, cherished and shared by anyone regardless of wealth.

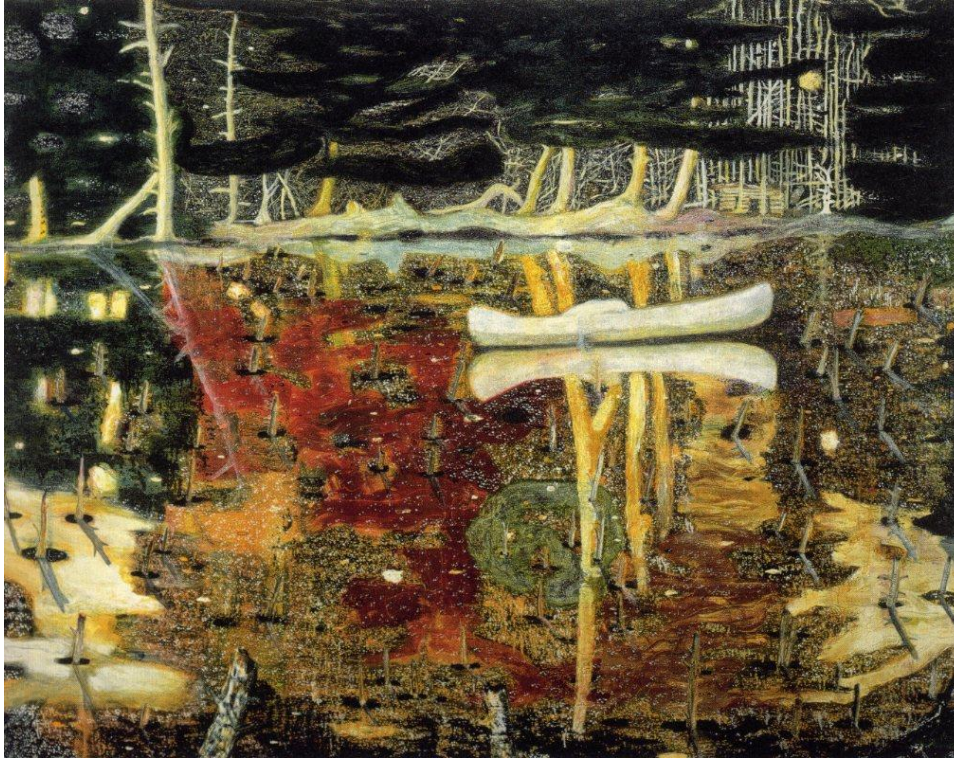


Fig. 2, Swamped, Doig, P. (1990)

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Figure 1: Van Doesburg, T. (1922) *Kleine Dada Soirée* [Lithograph print], available at : <https://artincontext.org/dadaism/> (accessed 03/11/21)

Figure 2: Doig, P. (1990) *Swamped*, [oil on canvas] available at:
<https://www.artnews.com/artnews/market/peter-doig-swamped-christies-1234605463/> (accessed 03/11/2021)

Figure 3: *The Pros and Cons of Manufacturing in China*, (2020) available at:
<https://www.cadcrowd.com/blog/the-pros-and-cons-of-manufacturing-in-china/> (accessed 03/11/21)

Task 2 – Observational Writing



Historically, cosmetics advertisements have been aimed at women, with a particular focus on the depiction and selling of the myth of female sexuality through the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975). Nowadays, according to Xu and Tan, “more beauty advertisements are advocating to empower women by promoting the images of feminist independence” (2020). The purpose of this L’oreal campaign is to illustrate the disparity between men and women in leadership roles, and to encourage men to entrust those roles to women. It could also have a secondary purpose, which is to signal the company’s supposedly feminist values.

Denotation, in relation to an image, consists of a number of signifiers (Saussure, 1983) that make up what the overall image is. This image has a dark red background with a lighter red smear of nail varnish spilling out of its bottle. The shape gets larger to the right of the page, which appears like a rising trend on a graph showing the growth in new patents over one year with women in leadership roles. There is a large, bold, capitalised font at the top in white, and various smaller pieces of text in gold. The page is balanced in colour and layout, with a similar balance of text to images on either side of the central makeup spill.

These signifiers add up to create the connotation, or signified, a meaning beyond the literal image, which when combined, create the sign (Barthes, 1957). According to Judith Williamson, "The sign consists of the signifier, the material object and the signified, which is it's meaning" (1978, p.25). This advert is not as clear cut as traditional adverts (with the purpose of directly selling) as it uses multiple signs to create a double-coded message. The iconic sign (Barthes, 1957) of a traditional makeup advert, which will often use colours like dark red and gold to connote to women aspirational themes of sexuality, glamour and femininity, is used here in a tongue-in-cheek way – the advert states it is aimed at men however one would assume the opposite on first glance. This is initially quite humorous because, as Roland Barthes wrote, "there is a social prohibition against the feminisation of men" (1990, p.257).

It is only when you read the writing that you understand what is actually signified in the image; The imagery of spilt makeup initially registers as a normal makeup advert, but is revealed to have connotations of anger, passion, even blood, represented by the colour and the appearance of it having been physically thrown across the image. The contradictory nature of this advertisement is also a nod to Rene Magritte's "Ceci n'est pas une pipe" (Magritte, 1929) as it is essentially saying "this is not what you think it is", reflecting a message about women as leaders; do not underestimate them or assume they will not be as good, if not better than, a man.

The strapline "Hire more women in leadership roles. We're all worth it" is written as though by a woman and is directional, almost defiant, and refers to L'oreal's famous slogan "because you're worth it" (1973). This technique turns the company's own iconic sign on it's head, illustrating that as well as women being worth selling to, they are also worth investing in as leaders as it's statistically profitable to do so.

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Task 3: Practice-Based Writing



Candles, ephemeral

A candle is described by the Oxford dictionary as a “cylinder or block of wax or tallow with a central wick which is lit to produce light as it burns” (2021) or “a usually moulded or dipped mass of wax or tallow containing a wick that may be burned (as to give light, heat, or scent or for celebration or votive purposes)” (Merriam webster 2021). There is some contention as to who invented the first candles, but it is thought that the Romans used an early variation called a taper which consisted of “a rope impregnated with grease, wax or bitumen” (Russell, L. 1968). Candles in their design haven’t changed much over the years, however the materials they’ve been made from have been consistently updated to improve efficiency, longevity, accessibility, aesthetics and scent, moving from the original tallow, to beeswax and later paraffin. Nowadays they are made from blending a number of ingredients such as beeswax, microcrystalline, polymer, plant waxes and paraffin.

The meaning of ephemeral is something that is fleeting (Crowther & Cumhaill, 2018 p.2). This can be something physical - a cigarette, a bus ticket, a pair of child’s shoes – or more abstract - a life, a thought,

a process. Candles' ephemeral nature could explain why they are placed on Buddhist shrines (Thanissaro, Nicholas, P. 2018) as a sign of impermanence and change, used in Paganism as an aid to meditation and to remember the dead (Lewis, J. 2009, p.53, p.237) and in Christian advent as both a "counting down" to Christmas and as a symbol of hope, joy and peace (Holcombe, J. 2021) They are also widely used in remembrance, whether to symbolize lighting up the darkness of grief, or as a ritual to bring peace and remember lost loved ones.

It is hard to define exactly what makes the humble candle such a versatile and meaningful object. Perhaps it is its ephemerality that gives a candle this force; the average candle burns 5-9 hours per ounce of wax depending on the wick size (Koester, V. 2019) meaning that it burns just slightly longer than its respective ceremony, giving the impression of being eternal without actually being so.

The idea of something as simple as a candle being rethought and refashioned into ephemeral art appeals to me, as whether it is a piece of homeware (fig.1 & fig.2) , or an art piece displayed in a museum (fig. 3), it will be totally destroyed - if the beholder decides to light it. In my current practice I am exploring ideas around memories and collecting. I am making a series of glass tubes adorned with textures created from ephemeral memories/objects that I've collected over the years. These could work as a vessel for a candle, as the textures and imagery would be highlighted through the clear glass, representing my memories frozen in time. The contrasts between the ephemeral candle and the preservation of my sentimental imagery, the light and the shadows, and the sense of ritual and mundanity, could all bring a multi-layered way in which my work could be read and received.

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Fig. 1 Butterflyresinart, available at: https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/987145732/fruit-loops-cereal-bowl-candle?gpla=1&gao=1&&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=shopping_uk_en_gb_e-home_and_living-home_decor-other&utm_custom1=k_EAlalQobChMIqq_R6Y_N9AIVDevCh21qwt6EAQYGyABEgL9IPD_BwE_k_&utm_content=go_12576529361_119127814546_507650181295_pla-303663660129_c_987145732engb_516643405&utm_custom2=12576529361&gclid=EAlalQobChMIqq_R6Y_N9AIVDevCh21qwt6EAQYGyABEgL9IPD_BwE accessed on 2/12/21



Fig. 2 Soeicandles, available at: https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/965654170/pillar-candleso-soy-candleo-aesthetic?gpla=1&gao=1&&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=shopping_uk_en_gb_e-home_and_living-home_decor-other&utm_custom1=k_EAlalQobChMIqq_R6Y_N9AIVDevTCh21qwt6EAQYeyABEgLAOPD_BwE_k_&utm_content=go_326233728_20236539408_88504425888_pla-106551393635_c_965654170engb_505656489&utm_custom2=326233728&gclid=EAlalQobChMIqq_R6Y_N9AIVDevTCh21qwt6EAQYeyABEgLAOPD_BwE accessed on 2/12/21



Fig. 3: Urs Fischer, *Untitled* (2011) [paraffin wax mixture, pigment, steel, wick] available at: <https://www.artforum.com/picks/urs-fischer-30739> accessed on 12/12/21